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On subspeciation in *Bias musicus* (Vieillot)

by P. A. Clancey

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Subspecific variation in the African broadbilled flycatcher *Bias musicus* (Vieillot) has been discussed wholly or in part by numerous workers, the more important reports being those of van Someren (1922), Sclater (1930), Chapin (1953), Rand, Friedmann and Traylor (1959) and White (1963), four races being generally admitted, these being as follows: *B. m. musicus* (Vieillot), 1818: Malimbe, Portuguese Congo, *B. m. feminina* Jackson, 1906: Toro, Uganda, *B. m. changamwensis* van Someren, 1919: near Mombasa, coastal Kenya, and *B. m. pallidiventris* van Someren, 1922: Canhoca, Cuanza Norte, Angola. Variation in this flycatcher affects general size and the colour of the female and the male in pre-basic dress. Generally speaking, western birds are largest, and in females and young males have the mantle and scapulars boldly streaked with sepia, and the underside is pale buff, the breast and lateral surfaces washed with rusty, and the flanks are somewhat streaked or spotted with sepia. In eastern African birds the dorsal streaking is restricted to the upper mantle and the lower hind neck, and does not extend on to the remainder of the mantle and scapulars, which surfaces incline to be paler, and below, the ground is a lighter buff and the lower throat and breast are less or not overlaid with tawny. At the present time four racial names are utilized to describe this variation, two of them applicable to taxa which are intermediate in their putative characters between the marked western and eastern extremes. A recent examination of a reasonable panel of material in the Durban Museum has revealed that some of the variation described by workers is simply the result of wear and the metamorphic changes wrought in a relatively short space of time by the strong African sun, and is not genetically related. It now seems that the marked changes effected by these agencies have not been fully appreciated hitherto in arranging the populations of *B. musicus* into acceptable geographical races.

In freshly moulted females and young males of all populations of *B. musicus* the ground colour to the mantle, scapulars, rump and upper tail-coverts is about the Amber Brown of Ridgway (1912, pl. iii), but in most populations there is a marked change in the space of only a few months, when the same surfaces may appear Tawny or Ochraceous-Tawny (pl. xv). At the same time, the ground to the whole of the ventral surface whitens, and the issue is further complicated in that not all populations wear at the same rate or so drastically. However, in assessing the subspecific variation, conclusions must, of necessity, be restricted to birds in fresh dress.

To turn to the two names given to the "intermediate" populations, namely *B. m. feminina* and *B. m. pallidiventris*, I find that specimens from

northern Angola (topotypical of the latter) and from Uganda (topotypical of the former, and including some skins of Jackson's own collecting) are not satisfactorily separable from the nominate race. In both territories, females and young males are heavily streaked over the whole mantle and scapulars as in nominotypical *B. musicus*, and the lightening over the lower throat and breast in Uganda birds seems to be no more than an incipient trend towards *B. m. changamwensis* in which the ground to these surfaces is definitely paler than in *B. m. musicus*. The underparts in the examples of *B. m. pallidiventris* examined, collected in October and December, are not whiter than examples of the nominate race in what I take to be a precisely comparable condition. It is interesting to note that the *Type* of *B. m. pallidiventris* is a late November bird and presumably in somewhat worn and faded condition. As both *B. m. feminina* and *B. m. pallidiventris* are not satisfactorily separable from *B. m. musicus* on the basis of the ventral coloration they should be merged with that race. Chapin (1953) only admitted *B. m. feminina* in deference to the views of others, and Schouteden (1955) referred all the Congo populations to the nominate race. These findings also substantiate the subspecific arrangement adopted by White (1963). This last named worker, however, considered the species to be inordinately variable, apparently not appreciating the seasonal variation induced by wear and sunlight, and I find the populations all relatively stable.

One other group of populations requires to be mentioned, and that is the one found in Moçambique and adjacent territories in the far south-east of the species' range. These populations have usually been associated with *B. m. pallidiventris* (=*B. m. musicus*), presumably on the basis of the white, not buff, underparts, but they are not applicable, as they have the largely unstreaked mantle and scapulars and small dimensions of *B. m. changamwensis*. Comparison between freshly moulted birds indicates that the very white ventral surface of the south-eastern populations is a valid character, and not one induced by wear or actinic action, and that separation from *B. m. changamwensis* on this and some additional characters is possible. For this population I have recently introduced the name *B. m. clarens* Clancey, 1966: Massinga, southern Moçambique.

The races of *Bias musicus* may therefore stand as follows:

(a) *Bias musicus musicus* (Vieillot), 1818: Malimbe, Portuguese Congo, with *B. m. feminina* Jackson, 1906: Toro, Uganda, and *B. m. pallidventris* van Someren, 1922: Canhoca, Cuanza Norte, Angola, as synonyms.

Female and young male in new moulted dress with mantle, scapulars, rump and upper tail-coverts deep Amber Brown, the feathers of the whole mantle and scapulars variably medially streaked with Sepia (pl. xxix), this dark streaking often present on the inner tertials and sometimes the wing-coverts and innermost rectrices. Underside about Light Buff (pl. xv), the lower throat, breast and lateral surfaces washed and somewhat streaked with Ochraceous-Tawny, the flanks variably overlaid or striated with Sepia. Wings of 10 ♂♂♀♀ 86–91 (88.3).

Range: Upper and Lower Guinea, from Sierra Leone and Liberia eastwards to the southern Sudan and western Uganda, and south to northern Angola, the Katanga, southern Congo, and, perhaps, western Tanzania.

(b) *Bias musicus changamwensis* van Someren, 1919: Changamwe, near Mombasa, coastal Kenya.

Female and young male in freshly moulted condition barely paler on the upperparts, but sepia streaking restricted to the lower hind neck and upper mantle, the lower mantle and scapulars plain Amber Brown. On underside, with the lower throat and breast less invaded with Ochraceous-Tawny, the ventral surface appearing paler. Size smaller. Wings of 10 ♂♂♀♀ 82–88 (84.9) mm. (coastal birds smaller than interior plateau specimens in this taxon: wings 82–85, as against 86.5–88 mm.).

Range: Eastern Uganda, Kenya (Highlands and coast), and Tanzania (not extreme west).

(c) *Bias musicus clarens* Clancey, 1966: Massinga, Sul do Save, southern Moçambique.

Like *B. m. changamwensis* on the upperparts in females and young males in pre-basic dress, but underside white, not pale buff, only the sides of the breast and lateral surfaces with some tawny overlay; malar streak almost white, and head-top matt black, and not sooty brown. Size the same. Wings of 10 ♂♂♀♀ 81.5–85.5 (83.9) mm.

Range: Moçambique, southern Malawi, and south-eastern Rhodesia. Northern range limits not known.

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A new race of Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais* (Finsch and Hartlaub), from Gorongoza Mountain, Moçambique

by Michael P. Stuart Irwin

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The population of the Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais* (Finsch and Hartlaub) occurring on Gorongoza Mountain, from whence it was first reported by Rosa Pinto (*Ostrich* Supplement 3, 1959: 114–115), is apparently confined to the region above the forest line from about 5,500 feet A.S.L. to the summit at just over 6,100 feet. Below the forest line up to 4,000 feet its place is taken by the Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans muenzneri* Reichenow, though Rosa Pinto does mention it as low as 3,000